

What if 117? JLU Variant

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Summary: Earth is safe. Its greatest persecutors defeated by the most faithful of protectors. But what if the ends yielded a different outcome? How will THIS Earth and its mightiest heroes react to UNSCDF's BEST and LUCKIEST operating in their backyard?

## 1. Chapter 1: LUCKY ME

\_ "Come-on it's obvious," -Wally West aka Flash  
> "I'm NOT! A Daddy's Little Girl! Right Miss Hol?" -HarpÄ" CTN  
0452-9.2<br>"Don't care," -Shayera Hol aka Hawkgirl  
> "Ouch that's cold Feathers..." -Wally West aka Flash<br>"..."  
-Shayera Hol aka Hawkgirl\_

**\*\*Chapter 1: LUCKY ME\*\***

'I'm...alive?' not the the most common first thought one would have after waking up but certainly an understandable one given the events that had transpired over the course of the last twenty-seven years for him. Twenty-seven years of constant warfare. That is 4,537 deployments, 2377 orbital drops, 1317 dreamless ice naps, 532 trauma induced concussions, 471 skeletal breaks, 278 witnessed plasma bombardments, 57 cases of severe internal bleeding, 42 demo/sabotage operations, 22 brothers and sisters unofficially listed as KIA, 17 recorded assassinations, 12 crashed pelicans/banshees (unintentional mind you), 8 failed operations, 4 Forerunner Installations, 1 Promethean Flagship, and a unprecedented expenditure of UNSC 7.62x51mm Armor-Piercing rounds. So given all of that, 'how am I still alive?' he wondered to himself while taking in his surroundings.

'The nuke. I detonated it manually... I saw the flash. So how?' Blinking spots of disbelief he quickly took note of the hard-light bubble surrounding him. This was certainly a first even for what usually prescribed as his standard pyrrhic victory. So why did it feel like more of a loss than usual? 'Cortana!'

"Cortana? Cortana, do you read?" fear a feeling he had long since suppressed and conquered was on the rise again. Not even in the presence in the Gravemind and its endless hordes of mutated-decaying flesh did he feel its crawling tingle, an yet the thought of loosing HER was more terrifying than any hellfire nightmare he could imagine. "Cortana, come in."

'She can't be... NO. Not after every...movement at six o'clock and I'm unarmed great...,' looking back he resisted the urge to do a double take as SHE appeared. Slowly she made her approach savoring each step fervently. It was commodity so many took for granted but for her it was a joy long since overdue. She took nine steps towards her long time protector and he took two in return. They were just a little outside arms reach of each other now.

"Howâ€|?"

"Oh, I'm the strangest thing you've seen all day?" the hard-light composed AI teased with an alien rattle of nervousness in her voice.

"But if we're here-" None of this was making sense. He was at the epicenter of a 30 megaton thermonuclear explosion. He should be cosmic dust right now not chatting face to face with his closest... Well friend would be a somewhat adequate term. But the bond differed from the comrades-in-arms/sibling relationship he had with his fellow SPARTANS. This was different. It FELT stronger. More important. Like the feeling he felt when he tried to think of his soap perfumed Mother, but even more important than that. A word came to mind but he had long since given it up when he accepted his needed role as a soldier for the good of humanity.

"It worked." she shook him from his musing with a tone that was bittersweet. "You did it. Just like you always do."

Cortana smiled earnestly - it was a smile she reserved only for HIM. He was scanning the bubble curiously for a possible exit, "So how do we get out of here?"

"I'm not coming with you this time." she looked down at the floor sorrowfully before steeling herself for what was to come next. Betraying sorrow glistened in Cortana's eyes as she locked hers with his through the anonymity of MJOLNIR's visor.

"â€|What?" he wasn't hearing, this couldn't be happening.

"Most of me is down there. I only held enough back to get you clear of the blast."

"No. That's not-!" damned the variables he just needed more time. To come up with a solution and get her to Halsey. He couldn't loose her like this. Not like how he lost Sam and Avery, not again. "We go together."

"It's already done."

"I am not leaving you here," down came the earth shattering boot.

"Johnâ€|" that was his name and he secretly favored it rolling off

her tongue over anyone else's. But to those who didn't know him he was Master Chief Petty Officer Sierra-117 a SPARTAN-II Commando of the UNSC. An unflinching Protector of Earth and all her Colonies, the accursed Demon of the Covenant, and whispered bogeyman of the Insurrection.

Gliding up to him Cortana touches his breastplate with tender adoration and yearning. Her hands glowed from the embrace as she savored the moment.

"I've waited so long to do that." She exhaled a relishing sigh as John looked away. He was finding it difficult to make eye contact now.

"It was my job to take care of you." The words were heavy and resolute like the burden all SPARTANS carried. A faded memory a broken promise to Parisa trickled in from his subconscious. His childhood friend had been killed in action in New Mombasa defending the ONI Alpha Site. Yet another failed promise.

"We were supposed to take care of each other. And we did."

John looks up and Cortana gives a melancholic smile, she hated seeing him like this. John was not some mildly sociopathic machine to be written off with the rest of ONI's dirty laundry. SPARTANS were not the disposable assets like Colonel Ackerson would have preferred - they were human beings. Indoctrinated super-humans slated for special operations but human beings all the same. They represented the best humanity had to offer and sadly the worse of what it was capable of. 75 children a quarter of the original intended 300 candidates were stripped of their homes, families, and innocence to create the ultimate wet-work asset for removing insurrection.

John was one of these children the luckiest Cortana often preach. But only now did she understand the curse that went with such luck. Last man standing was also the one left with the rusted shovel to bury the dead.

"Cortana. Pleaseâ€¦"

Cortana begins to back away. If she lingers any longer he'll suffer for it.

"Wait. I need to..." he reaches out to her and grabs a hold of her wrist tenderly causing her to glow. John was now holding her hand in a manor that made the AI self conscious of their predicament.

"What?" in all their time together she had never seen him this hesitant, so unsure. If she had a flesh and blood heart right now she was sure it would racing - 98.8991347% sure to be exact. High school memories belonging to her 'mother' occupied most of her residual processing power as she recalled previous confessions from lovestruck boys.

"I need to say something - but I don't know if it's real. If I'm still capable of... this feeling," he sounded lost now but the resolve in his brown eyes was unyielding as his visor depolarized. They were staring at each other face to face now and Cortana couldn't help but put her hand on his helmet stroking her thumb where his

cheek would have been as she had seen her "mother" do for a troubled Keyes all those years before. An understanding had been made not through words, but actions as John cradled her and in doing so gave her a feeling of contentment that she like any other woman longed for. To be wanted.

"John it's okay," there was joy and fulfillment where sorrow was last as she spoke. "I feel the same..."

"Cortana!" and just like that she was gone. The shattered remains of the composer came crashing down around him as he gazed at the spot in his arms he had been cradling her a second ago. His hard-light shelter faded into the void leaving Sierra-117 to drift with the rubble of the super weapon and his thoughts before his ingrained compartmentalization kicked in.

With decades of practice he began righting his trajectory with MJOLNIR's thrusters as he let his momentum carry him towards his intended target a large fragment of the composer - and from there he would spring board back towards the Mantle's Approach. A massive Forerunner flagship that dwarfed anything in Human and or Covenant space. MJOLNIR'S sensors said his comms were green but he couldn't raise the Infinity or any other UNSC asset in Sol. Aside from the Promethean colossus the system was devoid of activity.

Something happened that shouldn't have when the HAVOC nuke detonated. Looking back at the Earth he frowned at the unfamiliar sight of a still green Amazon Rainforest and an untouched Africa from a Sangheili glassing. Not to mention the 300 plus Orbital Defense Platforms that were now none existent.

Dozens of scenarios ran through his head as he simultaneously calculated his approach vector. An alternative or parallel reality maybe? Perhaps even time travel? The possibilities were infinite. It was times like these that he wondered why Cortana insisted on calling him Caveman or Barbarian.

His last IQ scoring was rated at 172. Average by SPARTAN standards perhaps even pitiful when compared to a Smart-AI but well above the norm compared to the rest of humanity. But that was irrelevant now. What was relevant was the fact he needed to find a viable oxygen source that wasn't currently 257,363 miles to his flank and required a M-Spec Reentry Pack.

Sighing at his predicament John resisted himself to reflecting on the last moments of his late friend...partner. That seemed like a more appropriate term now. What happened between him and Cortana however brief violated a number of regulations regarding fraternization and moral codes of conduct regarding naval personnel. But for some reason he could be careless at the moment. Maybe it was the possibility of death by asphyxiation looming over his head that made him indifferent. The fact that he stood up to Del Rio was a sign of a change, of what kind John didn't know. Analysis of the last three years not including his time in cryogenic stasis made him wonder if his time with Cortana did more than give him a tactical edge in combat. That or the Librarian's modifications to his genetic code resulted in some unforeseen side effects. He was sure he was an inch or two taller if that was at all possible.

"Foxtrot," 117 wasn't fond of profanities so he stuck with the

classic NATO Phonetics instead, even then he rarely swore. But what was staring him down made even John-117 pause. It was a Sentinel variant he never seen before - a massive construct rivaling the Dawn in size and probably tonnage too. A staring contest ensued between the super-soldier and the mechanical titan as constructors buzzing about the monstrosity faded into nonexistent like the gnats they were. Minutes went by in punitive silence till its optical cluster flashed light Cerulean and then the massive Sentinel sailed soundlessly over the SPARTAN-II without incident. The constructors followed suit as they made their way towards for the debris field.

John continued his drift towards the Mantle's Approach silently contemplating what just happened. "Most of me is down there," echoed in his mind giving the Master Chief a glimmer of hope as he inched his way towards the promethean obelisk occasionally righting his heading with his thrusters.

\*\*{15 minutes and a few close encounters with debris later}\*\*

John made touch down. The magnetic soles of his suit quickly adhered to the Mantle's Approach's hull with a soundless clunk. The superstructure was frighteningly intact making 117 wonder what it took to kill one of these monsters. After all it took a wildcat destabilization of the Pillar of Autumn's fusion drive core to destroy Halo what would it take to destroy the Mantle? Probably nothing short of a trio of NOVA bombs mused the Chief exasperatedly while trekking the surface for the wound they managed to inflict into the Promethean vessel.

He didn't have to look long as he gazed at the gaping hole into what constituted for a bow on a Forerunner ship. He and Cortana managed to cause more damage than he had originally theorized. The damage alone would have been crippling for most manor of space craft not for the Mantle it seemed as sentinels of various makes were floating about with their Huragok compatriots mending stress fractures and replacing reconditioned components of intricate molecular complexity. All of it was happening at such an awe inspiring rate that John had a sinking feeling they may very well finish by the weeks end. Further testament to Forerunner ingenuity it seemed.

John scanned the area for anything usable as a weapon as he slipped by his seemingly indifferent hosts into the Mantle's inner workings. He eventually found something that resembled a compacted plasma cutter crossed with a Covenant energy sword. He could help but smirk at the possibility that the Elites' most sacred weapon was another technical perversion of the Prophets.

Minutes evaporated as 117 lurked down cerulean lit corridors wondering where was security. His unusual spouts of luck since his entry made him wary as he pilfered a weapons rack for a suppressor and some pulse grenades. John was not going to be lulled into a false sense of security. He was going to find whatever fragments remained of Cortana and get out and maybe if they had enough time they'll blow the ship to high hell.

Soundlessly John rounded the corner suppressor raised as he approached the first locked door of his infiltration. Looking at the interface he began prepping a few worms and bypasses. 'This shouldn't take long,' he thought to himself while missing the near

instantaneous cyber-warfare and hacking sweeps Cortana provided.

"Lo porto il cuore di mio padre, e lo mente di mia madre." (I bear my father's heart, and the mind of my mother.) Echoed a voice that sounded strangely human. The Master Chief swept his rear for the speaker but found nothing making him wonder why a Forerunner AI was speaking Italian with an English accent over the intercom. "Well come on now Daddy don't shy I'm only a day old."

John raised an eyebrow at the impish remark that belonged in South-London. The door that had impeded his progress was now wide open with a glowing pedestal in view. Always cautious 117 slowly approaches the coffee table sized device while eyeing all the strange looking instrument protruding from the plating warily.

"Hi," said a cerulean teenage comprised of lines of code that emerged from the pedestal in a flicker of light. John narrowed his eyes on the familiar face that resembled Cortana's and someone else's. She had flowing wavy hair that just managed pass the shoulders and emerald eyes.

"Cortana?"

"Sorry but I'm CTN 0452-9.2," she gave a sympathetic smile. "Cortana's daughter but you can call me HarpÄ" if you like Daddy."

There it was again, "why are you calling me daddy?"

"Mum used copies of your Mark-VI's passive cerebral scans. Specifically your neural pathways during times of lost consciousness such as Delta Halo and the Ivanoff Research Station to complete my networking. Sort of makes me your brain child."

"Your accent?"

"Mum's vernacular default setting tweaked to meet my REFINED standards."

"The ship?"

"Ours' for the taking Daddy." John didn't know how to respond it shouldn't be this easy but it was. With its pervious commander dead the Mantel's Approach fell into standby mode leaving reclaimers as its natural inheritors. Then there was the was the "daddy" part. Fatherhood he always been cataloged as an impossibility since his early lectures concerning procreation and human relations from DÄ©jÄ . "Dadd-"

"I'm not your father..."

\*\*{Three Centuries latter, Poseidonis, Atlantis: 10,027 BCE}\*\*

The Atlantean capital was truly a marvel worthy of the modern area. While other civilizations squabbled over mysticism and land. The Atlanteans dedicated themselves to science and reason. John was sure that in a few short centuries they may very well catch up to humanity in his universe.

"It's a shame about King Thorvall Father," HarpÄ" frowned while they

wandered the markets.

"I'm sure his son Orin will make a fine ruler. It's his brother Shalako I'm worried about," John paused at the smell of grilled squid fresh from the coast that caused his stomach to grumble. Before gesturing to his daughter to follow. It took two years for 117 to trust HarpÄ", another twenty for him to publicly acknowledge her as his daughter.

"Why's that?"

"He's the perfect example of why I don't give much stock into religion."

>HarpÄ" blinked at that before recalling her mother's memories of the Covenant and the war her father fought. "Too much like Truth for my liking."<p>

"You think he'll make a power play?"

"Bet my only silver dollar on it."

\*\*{Outskirts of the Capital city of Colchis: 1192 BCE}\*\*

"What an obnoxious brat that Circe girl is!"

"HarpÄ"..."

"I mean the gall! She treated us like animals!" raved the Ancilla who appearance was of girl in her mid teens with raven hair and emerald eyes. "I have half a mind to..."

"HARPÄ'..."

"Ram my synth-skin foot up her pretentious little-" She has her Mother's temper.

"HARPÄ'!"

"Yes Father?"

"She's seven," John deadpanned calmly.

"Hmph!"

"Not everyone is born with the entire recorded sum of human knowledge and that of the forerunners."

"Point taken."

\*\*{Ganymede/Jupiter III, Jupiter: 1578 AD}\*\*

"And the mining operation?" John looked up from his latest revisions for the MJOLNIR GEN18 Combat Skin. If all went to plan the new suit would be fully compatible with his newly augmented genomes and cybernetics.

"The repurposing is going well. In two more decades the Ganymede Shield Installation will be finished," HarpÄ" scanned the walls of her father's "workshop" with mirthful amusement. Where there wasn't weapon racks there were prints and drawn references with an

unspecified number of sticky-notes attached. Stopping at a picture frame she smiled at a younger variant of herself all bundled up but still smiling brilliantly for the camera her father on the other hand was wearing his old GEN15 and a sincere half-smile. They were posed outside the gates Nanda Parbat after what her father called a, "quick hike."

HarpÄ" eyes finished at the new Kurz variant of the CELAR (Compact-channel Electromagnetic Linear Accelerator Rifle). It resembled a HK416 but with a thicker barrel jacket to house the mass accelerators inside barrel. She giggled at her Caveman of a Father's aptitude for destruction.

About millennia and a quarter ago John had gotten bored of watching humanities evolution. So he did what most men did at his age - 117 got a hobby. First it was simple things like fixing the fatal flaws in the old UNSC's armaments like the MA5 Series. Then improving their various munitions and the fine tunings of his War Sphinx. That evolved a century later into him developing his own equipment and armor. Tailoring everything to his several lifetimes of combat experience. Though the fall of Constantinople held a specific weight for the SPARTAN that was troubling to accept at times. His crossing of swords with the Greek God of War was still ringing in his ears and a lingering omen to the deities of Earth's various pantheons. Zeus's interference was the only thing that kept the fight from escalating to catastrophic apocalyptic proportions. That if allowed to continue would have left most of Southern Europe glassed.

His nobility in attempting to end the horrid bloodshed was what won Pallas Athena's and several other deities' favor. Though anyone other than the Master Chief could tell that the Goddess of Wisdom's devotion to the SPARTAN was anything but profession. His fight with Ares had also shaken galactic expectations of humanity and gave a foreshadowing of what was to come. The Oans had ordered Green Lantern Abin Sur to make more regular patrols of the sector after the incident reached their ears.

HarpÄ" whistled at the latest MJOLNIR's blueprint silently thinking, 'overkill much Father?'

John just grunted at her insinuation and muttered, "Ares" to counter. He scribbled a few thoughts down concerning nanotechnology before telekinetically summoning a cold mug from across the room. Frowning at the spoiled brew 117 focused on a displaced coffee ground at the bottom of the cup before increasing the kinetic energy of the millions of molecules that composed it. Seconds latter the SPARTAN had a steaming cup of brew. HarpÄ" just laugh at the blatant misuse of power while her Father went back to work.

\*\*{London, United Kingdom: June 12, 1897-1947 AD}\*\*

"And with this founding stone I place WE commemorate the birth of Septimus Precision Instruments," his voice boomed authority and direction as he spread the cement evenly over brick before placing an inscribed white granite stone effortlessly on top of its smaller red counterparts - it read, "Johanan Herman Septimus, 1897." A roar of cheers soon followed from the crowd of soon to be employees. The hope and promise of fair pay and safe work conditions drew many to the wealthy giant from the former colonies.



Rumor had it he struck gold in California. Others claim he inherited his wealth from a relative. Some joked he was a seven foot tall leprechaun, given his favor for wearing olive green. But what was undisputed was his generosity. First thing Septimus did when he moved into town was invest in a number of failing local businesses along the cobbles and a shabby orphanage on it last leg. Causing many entrepreneurs to question his sanity. Johanan or John as he was known in private simply questioned rhetorically, "Why not give a little?" and then walk on to do whatever it was he did.

A couple decades later Londoners were referring to the area as September's Nook or Sep-Nook by the locals. In 1942 Septimus Precision Instruments became SPI-International and built a branch in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia and Kochi, India. Half-decade later plans for two more Sep-Nooks one in Cape Town, South Africa and another in Sydney, Australia became finalized. A year later President Septimus retires and his daughter HarpÃ takes charge officially.

**\*\*{Earth, Sol System: Post-WWII-1990 AD}\*\***

Unofficially 117 had begun recruiting veterans of the last Great War and Cold War. The nationality mattered little to John what did was their skill set, ideology, and the ability to follow orders. His first recruit was a disillusioned Heer Captain by the name Heinrich Klaus Heusinger who served with distinction under Rommel in 1942. Second was a whispered La RÃsistance franÃsaise sniper by the name Jeanne Marie GrÃgoire who was growing bored with her renewed life as a florist. After her came a select group of servicemen from all around the world though the majority were MIA or believed to be KIA.

Army Rangers, Brandenburgers, British Commandos, CIASAD/SOG, Decima MAS, Delta, Devil's Brigade, KGB, MI5, Mossad, M Special Unit, Paras, OSS, Recces, SAS, SBS, Sacred Band, SEALs, SIS, Spetsnaz, Z Special Unit, and so on. The list was nearly endless but John only wanted the best. So he searched high and low for soldiers of actual grit. Not spandex wearing Mystery-Men or Heroes as the public was now called them. 117 labeled as them unstable liabilities.

Colonel Heusinger his second in command called them, "NaÃve pajama wearers."

Major Viktor Reznov the Chief's newly designated drill-sergeant from hell referred to them as, "Chyort colorful targets" or, "Spineless svoloch."

The JSAs existence was an insult to many especially to the former Soviet 3rd Shock Army Special Operations Captain. For him they turn the honor of what it meant to be a soldier and then made a mockery of it with their leotards and sophomoric endorsements.

**\*\*{Metropolis, United States: 2008 AD}\*\***

Eight years since the first debut of the Man of Steel and the world watched in horror as their greatest hero pummeled his cousin into the dirt. For Kara In-Ze it was the greatest pain a Kryptonian could ever endure, she was being struck down by her next of kin. Kal her cousin and the closest thing to a brother she ever knew was killing her.

"...Please Kal...", she was bloodied and broken and still reaching out to him. The love in her baby-blues never wavered despite his cruelty, "...Stop."

And for a second he did, causing Kara to sigh in relief before a bone chilling word escaped his lips, "Sorry."

Superman's eyes glowed with fiery wrath as he channeled enough solar energy to wipe her off the face of the earth. Tears streamed from Supergirl's closed eyes as she resigned herself to death. Clark was the most powerful and love hero of Earth if she couldn't stop to him who else could?

Seconds slip by but the blast of heat vision never came. Frowning she opened her eyes to the back of a heavily armored titan in olive green and black

"I will say this only once stand aside," Kal growled after getting over his shock. The armored soldier had appeared out of thin air. No there were others scurrying about just not as undetectable as him. A second or two later a duo of average sized men appeared next to the one called Supergirl wearing strange but highly sophisticated suits of black armor. They only paled in comparison to the one in green who calmly stare him down through the anonymity of a gold visor as his people applied first aid. Kal frowned when he realized his super vision couldn't penetrate the inner working of their suits or their technology.

"Most recent medical scans of your cerebrum show that your memories have been crudely altered recently," the apparent leader spoke. His voice was rough like graveled but stoic as steel. 'This will not be a man who breaks easily,' Kal thought to himself. "Given this fact and your history as good "samaritan" I'll avoid killing you to the best of my abilities."

Whatever urges to laugh at the sheer lunacy of the claim was drowned out by the sound of the kryptonian's nose breaking. The Last Son of Krypton had been sucker punched with enough force to send him the length of a three football fields before he was seemingly intercepted in midair and hammered into the ground with enough force to overshadow to the Little-Boy that hit Hiroshima in 1945. The earth quaked and a few hundred unready souls lost their footing.

Kal-El groaned from his impact crater it was not everyday he was hit with more newtons than a atomic bomb. A pain ridden cry soon followed the groan as a pair of shots from a high powered rifle tore through the Man of Steel's kneecaps.

Waves of shock spread through the military base as a equally horrendous feeling of alien pain spread through the fallen hero. Only one was relishing the moment when his most hated adversary was forced to endured the pained humiliation of being mortal. Wiping away the drool that was forming from the display of bleeding edge tech Alexander Luthor scheming mind began to work overtime. The armaments the mystery soldier had in his possession displayed capabilities far beyond anything LexCorp was cooking up, such technology could tip the scale of power in HIS favor. 'But how to approach such an individual?' he wondered to himself. 'I need more information.'

"Kryptonite tipped High Explosive Incendiary Rounds," the soldier said as his suit's repulsors lowered him into the crater. All the while he kept his rifle trained on the bleeding hostile. "Specifically tailored towards Kryptonian physiology. Surrender."

"STOP!" Sierra-117 groaned internally to himself he knew that relentless voice anywhere as it came barreling down into the crater to shield the Kryptonian.

\*\*{Medical Ward, C-PAIN Dawning Summer Prowler-Class Corvette, Sol System: 2008 AD}\*\*

"Troublesome," the Master Chief mutter in aequian while observing Kara In-Ze's surgery. Superman was floating next to him bruised and battered but all around no worse for wear. The resilience of kryptonian physiology was astounding. Not an hour ago they had removed the kryptonite fragments in his legs and Kent was already stan...err...floating. Something told John that he really didn't need those casts on his legs anymore.

HarpÄ" just giggled at her farther's plight. For years he been avoiding the media with such innate ease that the press began dubbing him, "The Illusive Man." The nickname stuck and John Herman Septimus aka TIM, the mysterious grandson of SPI Industries late founder became London's most illusiveness and sought after bachelor.

John's return media mainstream was made as believable as possible even going as far as to fake his birth in 1977 with the creation of a genetically engineered body keyed into his genetic markers. A living breathing avatar that publicly house 117 consciousness even after his honorable discharge from the Royal Navy's SBS in 2002. From there he took the reigns of SPI-International from HarpÄ". Her avatar expired a year later while in sleep mode. John's on the other hand was currently running on autopilot back in London's SPI branch.

"What's so funny?" the source to 117's plight questioned the synth-skin replica droid housing HarpÄ"'s consciousness.

"You intimidate him Miss Lane," supplied the AI with mirth.

"Don't tell her that. She's incorrigible as is," John muttered to the cerulean woman with emerald eyes.

This earned a snort from Superman and Jimmy, and a bemused scowl from Lois. Famed damsel in distress of Superman or not Lois Lane was a worldwide renowned investigative reporter of Daily Planet, and the only journalist who managed to corner John Septimus and get an exclusive interview from London's most Illusive Man.

She was also the one who was able to nag-talk him into not only sparing the Man of Steel but providing both kryptonians medical. How she managed to get herself and her camera boy onto the Pelican was another mystery in itself.

John sighed at least he was able to confiscate the camera and their mobiles. The withering glare they received after that made even a few of his men shudder despite facing down hell-spawn and invading extra-dimensional/terrestrial beings on a daily basis. What Superman saw in her 117 will never understand.

"So...what is this place?" the 5'7" woman persisted with a tape-recorder in his face.

"Medical," John replied dryly causing her to scowl at him again. He reminded Lois of her father. A stereotypical military man to the bone. Though for some reason she was having a strange sense of déjà vu like she met him before, but dismissed it as she would have remembered interviewing someone 7'8".

"How about your name then?" she added a little of that Lane charm. It always worked on daddy after all.

"Classified," or maybe not.

"Rank?"

"Classified."

"Origin?" Lois was grinding her teeth now.

"Elysium City, Eridanus II of the Eridanus System, UEG controlled space."

"And where is that?"

"An alternative reality," HarpÅ" answered nonchalantly.

"And your a Superhero from your universe?" John's head slowly turned towards the journalist causing her to unconsciously take a step back. Lane could since the daggers being directed at her through the anonymity of his gold visor.

"No," the disapproval in his voice subtle but unmistakeable. "I am a soldier."

"A soldier?"

"Yes," that tidbit of information gave Lois a new angle to exploit as she remembered her past conversation with her father growing up and interviews with various servicemen and women.

"Of what?"

"Humanity."

"Your duty?"

"My duty as a soldier is to protect humanity. Whatever the cost," that made Lane pause in her tracts. This guy was like a machine, the epitome of military professionalism. Someone who had no qualms about taking life nor giving up his own for the greater good. Daddy would love him.

"But not a hero?" Superman questioned the idea of someone being referred to as a hero offensive confused him greatly.

"I do what is expected of me like any good soldier. No soldier should we be praised as a hero for doing his or her duty - and my duty, my task is to protect Earth and all of her Colonies. No matter the

cost."

"So if Superman hadn't surrendered or recovered his memories you would have...", Jimmy began connect the dots.

"Killed him? Yes." Kal-El and the others tensed at that admission but then again their mysterious host seemed like a no nonsense kind of man. They really shouldn't be surprised.

"Because he's an alien?" Lois questioned.

"No liability."

"How am I a liability?" this guy was becoming more obnoxious than Batman by the second.

"Although your efforts are admirable Superman you are a civilian vigilante. You have neither military or formal law enforcement training in dealing with domestic terrorists."

"Domestic terrorists?"

"John Corben aka Metallo, Winslow Schott the 2nd aka Toyman, and

>Mark Mardon aka Weather Wizard are examples of domestic terrorists you have encountered during time as Superman."<p>

"And I've stopped each and every one of their schemes," the Man of Steel crossed his arms.

"Only after causing an unprecedented amount of collateral damage through the use of brute force," John countered while scrolling through his tac-pad.

"And I suppose your answer is to kill them?" Superman interrogated.

"Yes, preferably with two shots in the chest and one in the head to be sure."

"Why?"

"Because this is what happens if you don't," John handed the Kryptonian the tac-pad.

"What is this?"

"A list of people who have been injured or killed by your repeat offenders."

"This...can't be right..."

"And that's only Metropolis Superman," the SPARTAN studied the sobering effect his words were having on the kryptonian before choosing his words carefully. "I'm sorry for being blunt with you. In truth I like your idealistic view of the world it's inspiring, but not realistic. The facts speak for themselves, sociopaths like Luthor will never quit, never yield, never acknowledge the loss. Their pride will never allow it. They'll keep coming back again and again roping in more innocent lives with every scheme."

"Then how are you any different?" Lois questioned sincerely. "If you take life aren't you no better than they are?"

"I have asked myself that for countless millennia," the SPARTAN took back the tac-pad and gazed out the window at great expanse letting his eyes wander a bit before stopping at Earth. "My conscription was out of necessity in the beginning. I never chose this life. But if I knew then what I know now I'd make the same sacrifice a thousand fold for humanity's sake. I think that is how I'm different. Though you can never know for sure."

"You speak as if you fought some great battle." Superman recognized the tone it reminded him of Orion in a way. "What happened?"

"Almost three decades of total war and genocide," John spoke neutrally but the pace of his heartbeat betrayed the man's sorrow to Kal-El's sensitive ears. "Trillions died and hundreds of worlds were reduced to glass from plasma bombardment."

"We tried to counter them at every front but we had neither the technology, numbers, or resources to beat them back. All we could do was slow the bleeding until the Covenant found Reach our fortress world in the stars and set it ablaze. Earth and a handful of backwater colonies were all that truly remained, and it was at Earth where we make our last stand."

"What is the Covenant?"

"A theocratic hegemony consisting of eight species divided into castes that serve the word of their Prophets," John recited the textbook definition. "Who in turn speak the will of their Gods. The Prophet Hierarchs declared Humanity an affront to their gods and set out to exterminate us down to every last man, woman, and child."

"W-Why would they...?" Jimmy

"The Forerunners, their gods had long ago declare humanity as their equals and the rightful inheritors of everything left behind. The Forerunners were a hyper-advanced alien race that existed over 100,000 years ago. The truth concerning humanity's inheritance would have led to the dissolution of the Covenant and the Prophets' loss of political clout. I'd go into greater detail but the story of my known universe is a long one."

"Told it one too many times?"

"And then some Superman," he replied despondently. Names and faces of the lost flashed before his eyes. To him the wound was still fresh, nor did he ever want to forget those he served with and the sacrifices they all made.

"Father..." it was moments like these that HarpÄ" remember how much of a tired old soul the SPARTAN really was. Her head barely came up to his chest when she hugged him, she could have easily gotten a taller model but she preferred being daddy's little girl.

"I know." he smiled gently behind his helmet, "Lucky me."

## 2. Chapter 2: INDIA DOWN

**\*\*{Sorry for the delay folks life's been a bit hectic the past couple of months. One quick shout-out to KrautYank I hope you enjoy my portrayal of your OC mate â€" and without further adieu Ladies and Gents "Variant JLU."}\*\***

\_ "I'm tired of waiting." â€"Sierra-117\_

><em>"Waiting?" â€"Pallas Athena<em>

><em>"For them to learn from past mistakes." â€"Sierra-117<em>

><em>"I thought you said it was necessary?" â€"Pallas Athena<em>

><em>"I never foresaw the mystery-men eventuality." â€"Sierra-117<em>

><em>"I'm sorry, but I don't understand." â€"Pallas Athena<em>

><em>"Neither do I." â€"Sierra-117<em>

><em>"That's surprising." â€"Pallas Athena<em>

><em>"Is it? After all I'm still human." â€"Sierra-117<em>

**\*\*Chapter 2: INDIA DOWN\*\***

In the two years it took Superman to regain the greater part of humanity's trust. It took even less for the SPARTAN-II to be all but forgotten by the public. Sure he stopped a couple invasions, lead dozens of deniable ops, and if it wasn't for him Ares would still be toying with the hearts and minds of the people of Kaznia. Though John suspected King Gustav's fascist at times regime will lead to full blown revolution eventually. Only time would tell if he learns from his previous mistakes.

Interestingly enough Sierra-117's Celestial Paramilitary Armed Interventions Network or C-PAIN for short was becoming busier now than the previous three decades combined. How they managed to stay off the worlds radar was a miracle considering how easily Project CADMUS acquired the names and aliases of literally hundreds of costume vigilantes. But then again you had to be an idiot not to realize that Clark Kent was Superman or Bruce Wayne was really the Batman. The later of the two had not exactly been thrilled to hear that John had executed a comatose Ra's al Ghul during his last visit to Cairo from his beloved Talia. Though Wayne would be lying if he said he wasn't enjoying her more regular visits to Gotham. Rumor had it she was pregnant. But that wasn't relevant â€" what was, was before him now. The squabbling herd of bloodsucking UN politicians.

The Illusive Man as the Londoners called him sighed in exasperation as he watch UN representatives debate the use of nuclear armaments again. WMDs John knew the Earth needed to maintain security from alien threats. There was wisdom in exercising a healthy level of vigilance. Too much and you become a paranoid schizophrenic. Too little and your the naÃ¬ve schmuck who thinks everything can be solved with words. The Spartan understood the power of words but he valued actions more. Actions defined the individual and the nations represented. So what does he do when one of these representatives standing at podium now was giving a heartfelt speech about the need for nuclear disarmament?

"With all due respect Senator, but we can't trust the security of the entire world to one man," for the record John liked General Wells. The man was a realist who valued the lives of his men and security of his nation.

"I understand your feelings General," Superman was winding up to give one of his famous inspirational speeches. "But when Senator Carter first approached me I was reluctant to get involved, but afterâ€"

"Making a fool of yourself yet again Kal-El?" 117's broke The Man of Steel's momentum before appearing in front of the Kryptonian in the same manor he did in their previous encounter two years prior.

"You!" he pointed an accusing finger at the Spartan.

"I see the rumors about Kryptonian arrogance still holds water. Tell me how long did it take for you to come on over to that RAT'S side of thinking?" The armored soldier pointed at Senator Carter.

"The Senator no rat I assure youâ€|. And just becauseâ€"

"I could care less about political ideals right now Superman. The Nebraskan Senator is a wolf in sheep's clothing. If you don't believe me scan him with your super vision and tell me what you see yourself."

"D-Don't you dare!" Carter took a step back in manner that can only be described as a rat being cornered. "That is a violation of my privacy as a US citizen!"

"Senator?" Clark raised an eyebrow at the uncharacteristic behavior before focusing on where Carter's panicking heart should have been and paled a little, "Youâ€|. Your not human."

"He's is one of many Infiltrators sent to sabotage to ours defenses so when his species invades the Earth's conquest will be all the easier. Those nukes you were so quick to disarm are their only immediate deterrent."

John suddenly leveled a GEN7 CELAP (Compact-channel Electromagnetic Linear Accelerator Pistol) with the alien's center mass and without warning fired a trio of explosive tipped rounds faster than the Man of Steel could react. Not even a second later the being known as Carter exploded like an irritate zit over half the audience and Kent. The Chief's shields spared him the trouble of cleansing off the putrid smelling mucus like substance from his armor. 117 turned towards a stunned Kryptonian in a manner reminiscent of a father scolding a child, "This is the second time your naÃ-vetÃ© has forced me to make a public appearance Superman. Let's try and not make a habit out of this."

A slip-space portal opened next to the commando as he casually reloaded his pistol ignoring the dumbstruck audience and the fact he executed a sitting US Senator in cold blood on LIVE television. The whole world seem to stop at that moment as they realized how close they were to ruin. Content that his work was done John turned towards the portal there was an Indian Pale Ale waiting for him back home next to the leftover Chinese from last night in the



refrigerator.

"Wait who are you?" John paused in mid-stride and look at the Kenyan representative with a thoughtful glance.

"Hmm...I've gone by many names over the millennia Ma'am," this admission earned several whispers of disbelief. "The Egyptians called me Imhotep, Romulus to the Romans, Loukas Notaras of the Byzantine Empire, and Sir Gawain was my last more notable alias. But before all of that humanity called me Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Sierra-117 of the UNSC."

"If what you say is true why are you interfering now?" she approached the man with unconscious reverence.

"Because each of those times humanity was facing an opponent it was not ready for."

"Explain Master Chief," General Wells walked up to the Spartan without the slightest hint of fear. John unconsciously saluted the superior officer out of respect surprising Wells who returned the gesture.

"General, my outfit noticed an increase in extraterrestrial activity in the last two years, and all evidence points to an invasion. These thingsâ€¦," John gestured to the pile of goo on the floor. "â€¦Are like locus. Going from world to world consuming the entire biosphere till nothing is left. Recent interrogations reveals they were responsible for the Martian extinction 5 millennia ago."

John looked around at the stunned audience as security debated on how to address the Unknown. Sighing he looked down at Wells, "Sir, I'd recommend you press the President into upping the US readiness condition to DEFCON 2."

"Your serious?"

"Very. All relevant data concerning this species is being forwarded to all of the world's intelligence and military agencies as we speak. I would recommended immediate military coordination and cooperation between nations. Our survival as a species is at stake."

"Your asking for a lot," the Japanese speaker who was not too long ago campaigning for nuclear disarmament crossed his arms stubbornly.

"No representative. I am not. Darkseid's first invasion should have been the first kick in the pants. But instead all of you negligently rely on super powered individuals with sophomoric ideals."

"You really don't like us do you 117?" Superman stepped in with a frown.

"Respecting and liking don't have to go hand in hand kryptonian," and with that he was gone.

{The Batcave, Gotham City: 2008 AD}

"So what do you think Bruce?"

"I think his invasion and my deep space satellite saboteurs are one in the same," the Dark Knight began typing away on his infamous mainframe. "Given the information this Sierra-117 provided and my own investigations over the last year I'd say we are looking at an imminent attack."

"Yes," Superman said with hesitation. He didn't like talking behind people's back, but the Spartan's methods troubled him. "I mean this Master Chief?"

"Petty Officer of the Navy Sierra-117?" Batman finished. "I'm suspicious of the man more than anything. His rank for instance didn't exist until 1967 and yet he claims to be millennia old."

"A time traveler maybe?"

"Perhaps. Then there were his alter egos."

"And?" Superman was curious what the worlds greatest detective had uncovered.

"Jason Blood recognized his voice despite his misplaced North American accent."

Kent just blanched at the implications, "Sir Gawain was almost eight feet tall?"

"More like 7'3" or 4'," Superman smiled in amusement at that. "I suspect the armor he is wearing adds a few inches. He also destroyed the Merlin's Philosopher's Stone forcing Morgaine Le Fey and her dark army to retreat from Camelot. At least that is what Sir Justin claims."

"Sir Justin?"

"The Shining Knight."

"Ah," Clark wore a look of understanding before raising his eyebrow at the evasion. "But you didn't exactly answer my question Bruce."

"He's pragmatic activist who believe the ends always justify the means and is not afraid to take a life to accomplish his self-imposed duties." Wayne paused as he recalled his latest talk with his old friend Zatanna. She had become alarmed when she learned Bruce was investigating the former Green Knight of Camelot and demanded/ordered him to drop the case. "Apparently he's one of the most sought after beings in the magical world. He is equally feared as he is respected."

"Really?"

"They call him the Spartan," there was a power behind that title the duo could not unconsciously deny.

"The Spartan."

"Yes, I suspect that is what the NATO Phonetic Sierra stands for. Which could possibly hint at the extent of his military background," Bruce began to drink from one of the bat-memorabilia coffee mugs

Alfred had bought at one of the many souvenir gift shop across Gotham.

"You've lost me again," Bruce sometime wondered how Kent became a reporter as he channeled ireful daggers at the kryptonian.

"Clark he's a former child soldier," he said dryly.

"Impressive. You really are The World's Greatest Detective," both mystery-men jumped in surprise at voice behind them before looking back at the olive green titan casually observing the museum of criminal artifacts Batman collected over the years. Shaking his head at the giant penny he chuckled, "Such a waist of copper. Leonidas would have had a conniption. You certainly attract an ostentatious group Mister Wayne."

"Comes with the job," replied the cape crusader coolly while his mind raced over the implications before him. "How did you get in here?"

"The grandfather clock in the library. Mister Pennyworth was kind enough to let me in."

"Alfred?" Bruce looked at his long time chamberlain with disbelief.

"He blackmailed me Sir," John chuckled at the exasperated reply.

"I'd hardly call it blackmail, Staff Sergeant Pennyworth."

"What would you call it then Master Chief?"

"I'd call it an inexplicably treacherous extraction in the middle of a very hot Saigon, 1976. One of four favors you still owed me by the way," he reminded while continuing his tour.

"You do realized that is still classified information?" the old SAS Sergeant questioned as he applied presser to his sinuses.

"Possiblyâ€|," John said with mute humor.

"Enough! Who are you? What are you doing here? How do you two know each other?" Bruce snapped with controlled rage catching Superman off guard.

"So this is the true face of Bruce Wayne?" John looked back curiously before returning to his study of the various trophies this time stopping at one of Roxy Rocket's rocket-bikes to examine the mechanics. "Shoddy workmanship. Highly unstable. Did Miss Sutton realize she was basically riding a ticking time bomb?"

"She's a thrill-seeking sociopath what do you think? Now answer my questions," Batman growled while pointing a finger threateningly in the Spartan's face.

117 chuckles at the man's nerve. Most manner of being were down right terrified of him, "You certainly don't lack for courage. Very well. I'll get to the point of my intrusion. As you guess I'm Spartan-117

and I can only recall my first name. Which I will not tell you."

"â€|," Bruce said nothing as he just listened and deconstructed the man before him.

"I stumble upon this alternate reality 13,837 years ago when the Atlanteans' were on the cusp of their golden age. At the time they were probably five or more centuries away from reaching the technological tier of three and becoming a Space-Faring civilization like my own."

"But the sinking of Atlantis changed that."

"Correct. After the sky goddess Suula sunk the atlantean continent â€" humanity entered into an age of regression. One that stunted its growth for millennia to come. It was after that moment I became involved in protecting humanities development by limiting the impact external forces had on humans."

"Meaning aliens and mystical beings," Bruce crossed his arms.

"Correct again. I limited their influence as much as humanly possible ensuring science won out over magic and mysticism. Which is proven to hamper the intellectual evolution of any species that becomes overtly reliant on it. As for why I'm here? Since it is your deep space satellites that are getting hit right now I thought cooperation would be mutually beneficial."

"And Alfred?"

"I've been a friend of the royal family since Camelot and on numerous occasions worked with members of Military Intelligence and Special Operations. I still remember when Pennyworth here was still a greenhorn fresh from Hereford. Would have made a phenomenal C-PAIN operative had extenuating circumstances not gotten in the way of things. Still carrying your Walther Staff Sergeant?"

"Not as much as I would prefer. The young master has an abhorrent distaste for firearms."

"Kids."

"Indeed," Alfred smiled. Once always a soldier.

{Gotham City Police Department, Gotham City: 2008 AD}

"What in the Sam Hill is IT doing here?" James Gordon Commissioner of the Gotham City Police Department pointed at the looming titan in olive green behind the Dark Knight

"I'm a he," John said tiredly.

"Just another freak in costume if you ask me," Lieutenant Harvey Bullock sneered at the heavily armed Commando while Detective Montoya questioned his sanity. "Beside we don't need some psycho robot shooting up Gotham boss. I say we arrest the nut and his pointy eared friend."

"Half-cocked like a recruit fresh out of the academy?" Renee resisted the urge to laugh at the Spartan while Robin began to snicker. "Strange I thought a senior member GCPD would be more clean-cut than that? Pitiful."

"Why you son of a—" Batman remained quiet despite the faintest hint of a smile forming along his usually stoic face. Bullock had always been an arse seeing him spout and sputter was rather amusing change of pace.

"Language Ballocks there is a lady and a kid present," John nodded apologetically towards the Detective who smiled towards the gesture before ruffling Robin's hair to muffle the grumble's about being called a kid yet again.

"The name's Bullock!"

"Bullock?" The Spartan questioned, "Wouldn't that be worse? Cause a bullock is a male bovine that has been—"

Harvey looked like he was about to blow a gasket any moment as he desperately cut the so called freak off, "I know what it means!"

"Your right short-fused and easily predictable," the Spartan looked down towards the Boy Wonder who broke down laughing. Batman just sighed he expected the Spartan to be somewhat more professional but the moment Tim showed up he had been acting rather paternally. It confuse Bruce greatly how he could be the cold professional one moment and then warm and lighthearted the next. "I'm looking for an information broker Commissioner."

"What kind broker Master Chief?"

"The kind that deals with terrorists and aliens." Batman stepped in. He agreed to help so long as the Spartan refrained from killing anyone. 117 response was "I'll think about it," much to Wayne's ire. Scare tactics and threats didn't work on this man, not to mention he knew his secret identity

"He goes by the alias Sol. Real name Gregory Carey," 117 handed Gordon a file containing a unsuspecting looking red head in his early twenties.

"Graduated from Trinity College in 2002. Bachelor of Science in Computer Science with a minor in sociology," the Commissioner began to read out loud. "One account of illegal substance abused and distribution, two for assault and battery. That's it?"

"Carey's hit the big time with hacking the local S.T.A.R. Labs' mainframe. He most recently stole the blueprints for a Direct Energy Guardian Installation or DEGI for short. We suspect he plans on selling it to the alien infiltrators."

"Which does what?" Bullock cut in again with disinterest.

"Theoretically it should protect a city from orbital bombardment," Batman spoke knowingly after all it was his company that was aided and funded the development for the project.

"Or troop insertion."

"Orbital insertion? Is such a thing even possible?" Gordon put his two cents in as he recalled the many HALO Jumps he performed with MACV-SOG in Vietnam. Dropping in from outside the planet's atmosphere sounded tantamount to suicide.

"Very." John said as he thought of some rather balls ODSTs from his youth.

"Right I'll put an APB on Carey. In the meantime I need—" the Commissioner's words evaporated as fire erupted at his distant flank reddening the Gotham sky. John whipped his head around so fast that his body was an olive blur of motion that only Superman could have possibly followed had he opted to tag along. A moment later John was standing at the edge of GCPD's rooftop looking down the scope of his GEN8 CELAR Kurtz at the source of the sudden chaos.

"Wellington Bridge. A lorry's trailer was detonated. Chemical transport. Probably a 7,000 gallon capacity."

"Origin?" Gordon felt like he was in Nam again for some reason as he stood next to the Spartan. Batman and Robin had already gone ahead while Bullock and Montoya stood behind them.

"Smoke. The faint trail suggests a rocket propelled grenade. Tracking source. Office window on the thirty-second floor of the Powers Technology building south side." Renee was already radioing the information the rest of GCPD first responders as John followed the trail back to the bridge and then magnified the image in his scope. "I see small arms fire."

"Foot-mobiles?" the former MACV-SOG questioned.

"Twenty plus. Gang colors match those of Scarecrow and Two-face. Also I have eyes on known rogues Harley Quinn, Killer Croc, and Poison Ivy. They appear to be after the contents of a S.T.A.R. Labs armored convoy. Private security is holding but they need backup ASAP."

"S.T.A.R. Labs?" Montoya scowled. "The timing's too close to be a coincidence."

"That bridge is going to be packed with civvies, 'cause of rush hour," Bullock growled. Harvey might of been a royal arse but that didn't mean he wasn't being straight when he swore to protect and serve Gotham. "Damn Freaks we should have put 'em down when we had the chance."

"Agreed." John stood up and removed his CELAR's clip and sighed at the contents. He had begrudgingly loaded TTRs (Tactical Training Round) as per Wayne's price for his Gotham contacts. 117 slapped the mag back into his custom CELAR Kurtz before making sure the magazines containing HEAP (High Explosive Armor Piercing) rounds were in comfortable reach. Whether the vigilante liked it or not the deal would be null and void the moment non-combatants were placed in an excruciating circumstance. Civilian lives mattered more than keeping his word with Batman. "Gordon tell SWAT to be selective with their targets. I'm going."

"Holy crap he jumped!" bellowed the larger than average Lieutenant as hard-light overlapped over MJOLNIR's rear repulsors forming a complex system of nacelles and flaps that launched the Spartan at Wellington Bridge at ear shattering speeds. Bullock just stared at the Spartan's taillights for a moment before laughing uncontrollably.

"What's so damn funny?" Renee scowled. Gordon was already halfway down the stairs radioing the SWAT Commander.

"Besides the magic glowing jet-pack that broke the sound barrier?" Harvey Bullock jeered. "Do the math Montoya. Big-Green executed a sitting US Senator live on TV. Sure Carter was a spy but damn the cojones on that Mother. So tell me Detective what makes you think 'em loonies are going to get off any better?"

"â€|," Renee frowned at the implications. "Your point Lieutenant?"

"I think I'm beginning to like the crazy bastard." She blink in shock at the man as he exited the roof. "Come'n Gordon's going to need help coordinating this shit storm."

{Wellington Bridge, Gotham City: 2008 AD}

Robin internally cursed at their predicament while taking shelter behind the shredded corpse of a H3 Humvee that probably belonged to one of Gotham's better-offs. Not that the tattered remains of the family inside could say anything to verify it. Tim and Batman had to finish this quickly before any more loss of life. Problem was Wayne was wrestling with Killer Croc while simultaneously avoiding the overlapping fields of fire Two-Face's people had set up. They were just waiting for their chance to mince the Bat.

Looking over the corner of the rear bumper Drake assessed Scarecrow's crew cautiously. They were just looking for the opportunity to waste him while Ivy's plants tore into the last armored vehicle to retrieve whatever it was S.T.A.R. Labs was carting. Glancing down at remains of Gotham City patrolman next to him he suppressed the urge to gag with a shudder. It was the first time he watched a man die. Noâ€|that's not right. Officer Pomeroy didn't die he sacrificed himself. Pushed the Boy Wonder out of the line of fire before calmly bleeding out next to him saying, "Stay low and out of sight Kid. Stay low and out of sightâ€|." Less than half a minute later the officer went into hemorrhagic shock while taking his last breaths. Robin couldn't pinned down what he was feeling right now. Guilt for the man who saved his life at the cost of his own, anger for the senseless killing from the so called rogues gallery, and dare he think it fear.

Tim was afraid as any well-adjusted twelve year-old should be in a situation like this â€" fearing death was natural. Now he understood why Bruce always took Barb or on occasion Dick with him for the murder cases. It was also probably why the 117 did not want him coming with them in the first place. Did he know something like this was going to happen? The man seemed to be geared up for war when they first met. 'Is this why the Spartan and Jason uses guns?' he thought to himself while staring at the woman still sitting in the drivers seat of the car in front of him with half her brains missing. A minute later Batman came sailing over the withered remains of a

taxicab clutching his right arm while taking cover.

"Your bleedingâ€¦." Robin whispered to Bruce who somehow miraculously heard him over the symphony of automatic fire. The Dark Knight's eyes widened at the sight of his petrified ward. This was exactly the situation he wanted to protect Robin from and exactly the reason the Master Chief wanted Tim to stay home. Linger on that thought Wayne noted his surroundings and remembered the deal he made with the former Green Knight of Camelot. He had to end this soon beforeâ€¦the roar jet engines deafened the sound of kalashnikovs and uzis as a green meteor impacted the Wellington Bridge flattening an ugly honda civic that was thankfully vacant.

'Too late,' Batman thought to himself as he saw the Spartan remove the harmless TTRs from his rifle and then replaced them with live rounds.

{Change of Perspective}

The bridge shook and Pamela lost her footing on the head of one her babies a rather dapper Cobra-Lily/Ficus-aurea hybrid. She smiled as it steadied her while its siblings continued their work. Whatever the humans were hiding in this transport must have been important she thought to herself. Perhaps something worth stealing back once she gained the compounds promised to her by Sol.

"Oh holy crap it's a Tin-Man!" Harley yelled much to her confusion. A moment later she heard both Crane's and Dent's crews stopped firing. There were hush whispers and fearful curses now as Poison Ivy turned to look at the source of all the commotion.

"You have two options," a gravelly voice spoke with calm clarity despite the distance. Isley oddly found herself applauding the Spartan's taste in color and unconsciously eyeing the olive green titan. Ivy's eyes widened as her subconscious scrutinizing of the man was overridden by the tranquil waves of submission reverberating from her children. What they were exhaling was full of contradictories fueled by euphoric trepidations.

The Green (Gaia) the elemental force which connects all forms of plant life was speaking to Pamela through her babies of forewarning and reverence. 'Unyielding protector,' it proudly praised. 'Merciless hunter,' it shivered with delight. 'Ruggedly gorgeous,' it giggled sensually causing Ivy to blush at the uncharacteristic proclamation. 'A dedicated father,' it said with bewitched sigh confusing Ivy even further. It was times like these when she wished her fellow protector Swamp-Thing was available for council. 'Humbler of Gods. Slayer of Demons,' the Green finished.

"Oh yeah? What're they Tin-Man?" Harley mocked much Ivy's horror as she shook herself from her reflections. If the Green whispered feared and respected for this man then perhaps it would be wise to give 117 the same regard. At least that was what she told herself when a very human sensations of dread and longing reverberated through her core.

"Surrenderâ€¦or face extreme prejudice," was his detached ultimatum causing the majority of the rogues to unwillingly shudder. While a resistant Harley sassily opened her mouth only to be quickly gaged and tied by an over grown dandelion with red thorns.



"Quiet," Pam hissed surprising Quinzel at the atypical glimmer of fear in the hybrid's eyes.

A questioning look replaced the blond's scowl once the gagging tendril of vegetation was removed, "Red?"

"That man leveled Superman remember?" Ivy had maneuvered her plants to shields her fellow Gotham Siren when Scarecrow cut her off with a vindictive laugh.

"I'll go with option three," Crane leveled a M32 grenade launcher loaded with his dreaded Fear Toxin and double tapped the commando. "Killing you!"

Scarecrow's head popped like an inflated melon a second later as the Spartan methodically came out of the cloud of deadly toxins firing full auto at the hapless criminals. Not even half a minute and most of Scarecrow's goons were dead and Two-Faces people were now taking casualties. Pam and Harleen took cover behind an abandoned full-size truck that had its tires mysteriously shot-out while Ivy's babies hunkered down around them. Neither Siren were willing to poke their heads out when a sickening crack was heard silencing the roar of a charging reptile.

Waylon Jones's saurian form came crashing into the engine block of a broken semi well beyond repair causing both women to pale at the sight. Croc's body was bent at an unnatural angle with his head twisted a full 180 degrees in the opposite direction causing both women to blanch at the implications. They would later learn from Catwoman who was cringing-watching with abhorring fascination from the roof tops that 117 had backhanded Killer Croc aside like a disobedient child while reloading his rifle.

"Shoot me and the kiddies in the bus go sky-high!" Harvey bellowed a minute later causing both women to peak from cover to a scene that rekindled their misplaced maternal instincts. Three lanes down from their hide-hole was an elementary school bus full of children and a wireless detonator coupled with enough Semtex level a M1 Abram twice over.

"Raisin-Head what the hell ya doing," Quinn said-screamed what was on everyone else's mind. Ivy was already giving her babies orders to move on Harvey as fond memories of the children at Robinson Park resurfaced. After the massive earthquake in 06 the government had disavowed their abysmal city from the United States and declare Gotham a, "No Man's Land." While other villains squabbled over territory Pamela rooted herself in Robinson Park turning it into a tropical paradise and took in sixteen orphans despite her supposed misanthropy.

"What I'm doing is getting out of here!" there was a crazier look in his eyes than usual as he took a step back with his finger on the detonator. "Besides the bastard made me drop my silver dolla!" "GUAH!"

Smoke wafted from the barrel of John's assault rifle, "You talk too much."

"Bastard!" Harvey angrily growled while staring incredulously at

the charred stump that once coupled to his hand and the detonator. Two-face shook with rage before his shoulders slumped in defeat. He'll go back to Arkham for now. But once Dent got out he was going make, 'the SOB pay' he smiled to himself, "I surrenâ€"

Like Jonathan Crane Harvey Dent's head ceased to exist when a HEAP round entered his warped nasal cavity and then detonating after two to three inches of penetration. John lowered his rifle and the girls stare at him in disbelief while Batman and Robin final reached the Commando.

"You killed all of themâ€|," whispered Tim in disbelief while Bruce collect his thoughts.

"Your on your own," 117 turned to the Detective who's arm got clipped by stray fire. There was fire in the man's eyes John easily respected, but 117 didn't have time for sophomoric idealists.

"Fine. Doctors Isley and Quinzel," the II turned to the Gotham Sirens. "It's your lucky day."

"Oh yeah? Cuz from where I'm standing I ain't feeling so fortunate," Quinn snapped fueling Ivy's exasperation.

"What do you want?" Whatever objections the dynamic duo had were occupied by Isley's babies while Ivy studied the Spartan.

"Sol."

{VTOL Inbound for Pier 19, Gotham City: 2008 AD}

"So let me get this straight," Harley began again from the rear end of GEN14 Osprey Transport. "Sol is selling out to the aliens."

"Richtig (right)," said the C-PAIN Operator across from Quinn while shuffling a vintage set of playing cards. Sitting next to him was his squad-mate silently giving his light support weapon a third once-over.

"Your German," she said while pointing at the man with the end of her sledge hammer.

"Korrekt again."

"He's Russian." She then gestured to the 6'6" tall former soviet.

"Ð"Ð° (Yes)," was the heavy weapons and tech specialist's response.

"And she's Japanese?" Harley receive only sigh from the straphanger standing in the middle of the VTOL's troop bay four steps away from the Chief and Isley.

"And you guys are like some sort of super secret agent group," there was silly flicker of fascination in her eyes now as she chatted up the trio of slightly taller than average bio-augmented cyborgs.

'Quite the curious one isn't she Willhelm?' the ex first generation Spetznaz messaged his compatriot via a private link through their positronic brains. Bio-synthetics neural technology was one of the many miracles C-PAIN had at their finger tips. Assets could communicate, coordinate, and interpret valuable intel simultaneously in the confines of milliseconds. Compared to the precious minutes it took non augmented operators to respond to a situation. A godsend many called it.

'Let sie (her) have her fun Kozin,' the squad's designated marksman Willhelm Krause chuckled. Harley's genuine curiosity was rather refreshing actually. Hell it probably helped that like most men he was a sucker for a pretty girl but he didn't have to tell any one that, "In a wayâ€¦". Yes FrÃ¶ulein LÃ¶schelns (Ms. Smiles)."

"Eh? What did you call me?" Quinzel felt a blush form behind her cosmetics as the cool as a cucumber german in a full black body suit with moderate combat webbing continued to shuffle cards casually. Harley was no expert in bio-synthetics but she recognized artificial muscle when she saw it. Those suits were bleeding edge tech, not as fancy as what 117 fella was wearing but still pretty out there compared to B-Man.

"Irrelevant," the CO of the two cut in. "We will be landing soon so make sure to double your check equipment."

"Ð"Ð° (Yes) Major," Sergei Kozin stood up to start running suit diagnostics as Krause did the same from his seat.

"Shame thoughâ€¦," Harley said with a bored look. Then pointed at the Russian, "Why couldn't you be Italian? Then you three could be Team Axis!"

"Like I haven't heard that before," muttered the Major as she prepped her SMG. Despite being the youngest of the three the former NaichÃ• operative was placed in command of their squad twelve years ago. Both men were old enough to be her grandfathers but neither of the ageless WWII vets seemed to object to her appointment.

Looking back into the Osprey she frowned at how close Poison Ivy was standing next to her superior. If she didn't know any better she'd say the misanthropic eco-terrorist was swooning over the Spartan before demising the thought. Isley must have been planing to use her pheromones or something to seduce him and gain access to their resources.

Whatever her reason Major Motoko Kusanagi wasn't going to let Doctor Isley out of her sights.

{Change of Perspective}

"Those suits their wearing seem almost symbiotic in nature," Pamela spoke while studying the trio next to Harley known as Oscar-Six. The one identified as the Major struck Isley as a cold professional with an unmistakable inherent distrust for her and Quinn. How she kept both Gotham Sirens in her peripheral at all times was a little scary. Call-sign Saw the towering Russian with the squad automatic weapon was perhaps the most jovial or sarcastic of the three it was hard to tell when a person's face was completely concealed by a sophisticated

all purpose rebreather. Then there was Ritter the cool as cucumber marksman of the team. Nothing seemed to faze him " even Harley's never ending list of questions. He just patiently shuffled his playing cards while answering what question he could while politely declining to one couldn't. Who said chivalry was dead?

117 certainly didn't seem to be lacking in it, 'In a way he is rather charming'. Pam blinked at the thought before wondering where the devil it came from. She was OVER men especially after the torture she went through in her younger years as Dr. Woodrue's assistant. Gone was the naive little girl from Seattle only the strong independent villainess of Gotham remained.

"What else do you see Doctor?" the Spartan's calm words shook Pamela from her inner self monologue causing Ivy to look up to the towering man who was tilting his head down towards her in a curious manner.

"Yes well", Pam paused for a second repressing the blush she felt warming her cheeks before reflecting on the question. She might have specialized in botany and toxicology initially since her time at Uni but a girl like her knew she needed to broaden her scientific scopes if she wanted to survive Gotham. "Given the fluidity and grace of their movements I'd hypothesis recombinant DNA."

"Good eye," the Chief complimented again while giving his CELAR Kurtz a quick once over. "Anything else?"

"Is this some sort of test or are you toying with me 117?" Ivy crossed her arms and began tapping her foot excitably. Much to her amusement the Spartan flinched a little under her withering glare. It was faint almost unnoticeable even after the Master Chief righted himself but Pamela caught it all the same.

"Am I making you uncomfortable Chief?" she emphasized the last bit teasingly as one of her crimson brows rose a little. It had been so long since she just teased a man the feeling was almost euphoric. Then he chuckled it was indistinct almost inaudible to everyone else in the troop bay but it was there. Pamela was finding its gravel undertones strangely soothing as she unconsciously took a step forward.

"Only a little," John answered calmly while leaning in. "You?"

"Wait! Are you two flirting?!" Harley declare excitedly causing both guilty parties to back up a little and 117's underling to stare at their ageless leader incredulously. Quinn didn't seem to notice or care as she pull Ivy into hug, "Way to go Red!"

Things remained awkward after that. Oscar-Six kept glancing at the II wondering if he was somehow become vulnerable to Poison Ivy's pheromones. While Quinzel was incessant in her embarrassing encouragement of her longtime friend. Hell if Ivy didn't know any better she'd say Harley was intentionally drawing unwanted attention to the human-plant hybrid for the fun of it. She wouldn't do that right? When they final reached their destination Pamela found herself thanking whatever deity was that was watching over her for the reprieve.

{Pier 19, Gotham City: 5 minutes and a slotted Royal Flush Gang later; 2008 AD}

"Pleaseâ€¦! Don't kill me!" a spineless redhead known to the criminal underworld as Sol begged at the Spartan's feet while Saw made sure the android known as Ace stayed dead. Ritter might have picked the clanker's head clean off right with his DMR, but the damn thing kept moving even after loosing its head. Kozin was now tearing through Ace's chest trying to the locate central processing unit and memory maybe even learn what Royal Flush had been up to. "It wasn't me! I swear! On my mother's grave! It wasâ€¦it was the alien mind control!"

"Vell, it ist original I'll give him that," Krause deadpanned while Kusanagi linked HarpÃ" to Carey's mainframe. "Vhat do du vant to do boss?"

"We'll give him to Hudson and Weaver. They'll get him talking."

"What! No! Pleaâ€¦" Gregory's wails were silenced by a Tactical Training Round to the head causing both Gotham Sirens blanch at the Chief's pitiless response.

"All right. I'll wrap him up to go. Oscar-Six pick this place clean. If it looks interesting, bag it. If it's too big? Then three dimensional snapshots use as much memory as you need," John said as he put a gag on Sol before applying a set of plastic flex-cuffs and a black bag over his head incase he wakes up. Turning back to the two Sirens fidgeting at the muddled position they were John gave them a nod towards the exit, "Doctors Isley and Quinzel thank you for your assistance."

"That's it?" the duo said in sync.

"That is it," was his answer as he placed the traitor on his shoulder and began walking towards the descending VTOL.

Poison Ivy was expecting him drag her and Harley back to the Arkham Asylum or something, "How do we know you won't put two in the back of our heads the moment we leave?"

"I keep my promises Doctor," John kept walking towards the Osprey while Oscar-Six fell into formation. "Oh and one more thing."

"Oh and what would that be Tin-Man?" Quinzel said sassily. Ritter shoulder seemed to bob up and down in manner that resembled chuckles.

"Stay out of troubleâ€¦or I'll find you."

"What if I want to be found?" Pamela said without thinking causing John to look back curiously and Oscar-Six to faintly stumble up the transport's ramp. The Spartan paused for an eternity before giving a gradual nod that made Isley's a heart flutter a little as the Osprey quickly ascended into black nothing of space. Glancing to her left Ivy blanch at the duo of gobsmacked looks coming from her two fellow Gotham Sirens. Harley was pinching herself while Catwoman who had just arrived a moment ago now had girlish glimmer in her feline eyes that said she wanted all the juicy details. Sighing Pamela said the

first thing that came to mind when Selina's mouth began to part, "Oh shut up."

End  
file.